

Affordable Housing & Conservation: Collaboration Benefits & Examples

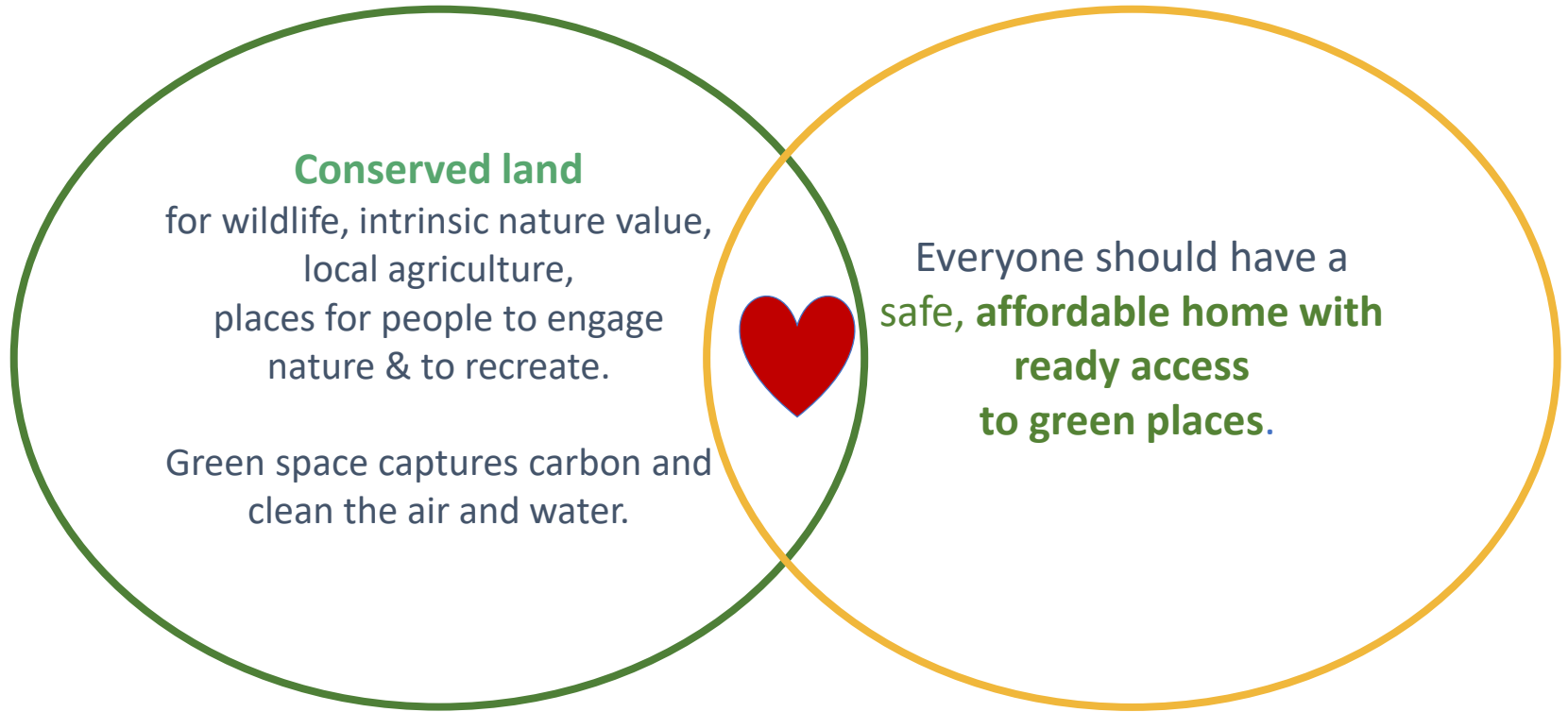
David Hindin and Connie Manes

March 23, 2024

40th Annual Connecticut Land Conservation
Conference



Overlapping value among affordable housing and land conservation



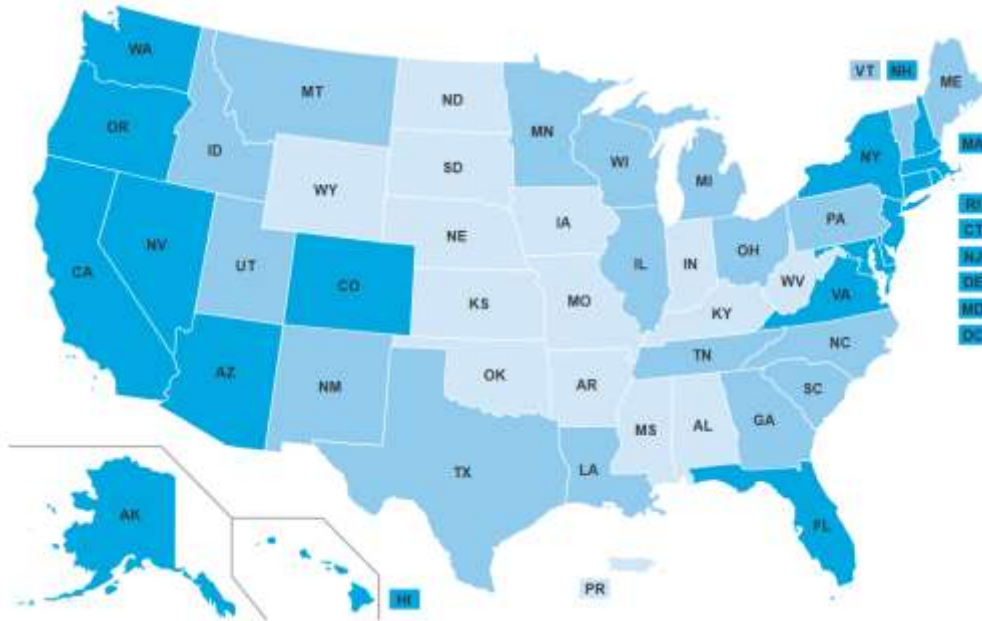
Affordable Housing Need

- Per U.S. HUD: affordable housing is where occupant paying no more than 30% of gross income for housing.
 - Just 16% of homes for sale in 2023 were affordable, down from 50% in 2013.
 - Redfin December 2023 report
- National Low Income Housing Coalition estimates gap of 7.3 million rental units for lowest-income renters (incomes at or below 30% of average median income).
 - The Gap Report, March 2024

How Much Do You Need to Earn to Afford a Modest Apartment in Your State?

Hourly wage required to afford a two-bedroom rental home by state.

● Below \$19.00 ● \$19.00 - \$26.00 ● Above \$26.00



Connecticut:

- Need to earn \$32/hour to afford modest 2-bedroom rental home.
 - 9th highest in the country.
- Or work 85/hours per week to afford 2-bedroom rental home

Source: National Low Income Housing Coalition, Out of Reach Report, 2023.

Need for collaboration

Imperative given affordable housing shortages, climate change, biodiversity loss, and racial injustice.

- New demands for land to meet multiple, changing needs – especially with climate change
- Advance LTA Standard 8b: supporting affordable housing helps show the public benefit of land conservation projects.

Outcomes:

- Conserving more land
- Building more high-quality, climate resilient affordable housing.
- Deeper community engagement
- Happier and healthier people.

Affordable Housing Efforts by Conservation Land Trusts

- From 2021/2022 national research in Lincoln Institute Working Paper:
 - About 8-9% of land conservation trusts have engaged in affordable housing work.
 - Variety of types, methods and outcomes.
 - Executive Directors doing affordable housing work as resonates with them and is reflective of [community centered conservation](#).
- Connecticut Survey results from 2023:
 - About 10% of land trusts engaged, collaborated or partnered on affordable housing.
 - Some expressed interest/intent in doing more of this in the future.
- Anecdotal example that land trusts could be increasing their engagement and support of affordable housing.

Three ways for conservation trusts to support affordable housing: start with do no harm.

1. Do not oppose affordable housing projects



2. Create and implement purposeful relationships



3. Design & do multi-goal projects

Create purposeful relationships

1. Identify potential partners: community land trusts, land banks, other affordable housing groups, local/regional government agencies.
2. Visit the others' properties, learn about their projects.
3. Formal and informal meetings with housing organizations among staff and board.
 - ❖ One meeting is a start not the end.
4. Identify common goals and needs.
5. Housing and conservation staff serve on each other's boards.
6. Share resources and expertise.

Purposeful Relationship Possibilities

- Conservation:
 - Land trusts
 - Conservation and park commissions at regional, municipal or town level.
- Affordable Housing:
 - Community land trusts (about 300 nationwide, only 1 in CT so far).
 - Shared equity homeownership programs
 - Inclusionary housing programs for market-based development
 - Other affordable housing groups.
- Related Others:
 - Land Banks (4 in CT)
 - Community Foundations across CT.
 - Renter and tenant organizations.
 - Organizations addressing homelessness.
 - Urban parks and nature agencies.
 - Historic preservation organizations.
 - CT Regional COGs, local and state agencies.
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - Universities with relevant programs and centers.

Do projects together and/or support affordable housing

1. Improve access to existing conserved lands for all community members.
2. Develop and advocate for policies, regulations and funding for:
 - Affordable housing.
 - Conservation and affordable housing as complementary efforts.
3. Apply for funding with housing or community development partners.
4. Purchase property and allocate among affordable housing, conservation and/or agriculture. For example, housing close to the roads and utilities.

Do projects together and/or support affordable housing - continued

5. Add housing adjacent to conserved land (e.g., housing for local farmers).
6. Advocate for conservation projects near affordable housing or integrated with.
7. Land exchanges.
8. Support creation of community gardens and parks near existing and future affordable housing.

Audience prompt: What else?

- What ideas do you have for conservation land trusts to support affordable housing?
- What examples are you aware of in CT?



Berkshire Taconic
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



Cross Sector Community Engagement to Create Housing Opportunity

GOALS:

- 1) **to facilitate a collaborative process** that merges the need for housing solutions and economic growth with long-term commitments to conservation of the region's natural beauty
- 2) **to equip communities with tools, relationships, and criteria** to make decisions about land use; have dialogue when opportunities arise
- 3) **to help build a robust pipeline of feasible affordable housing opportunities in the region** through efforts that build public will, foster cross-sector collaboration, and provide support to our all-volunteer local housing non-profits.

Participants

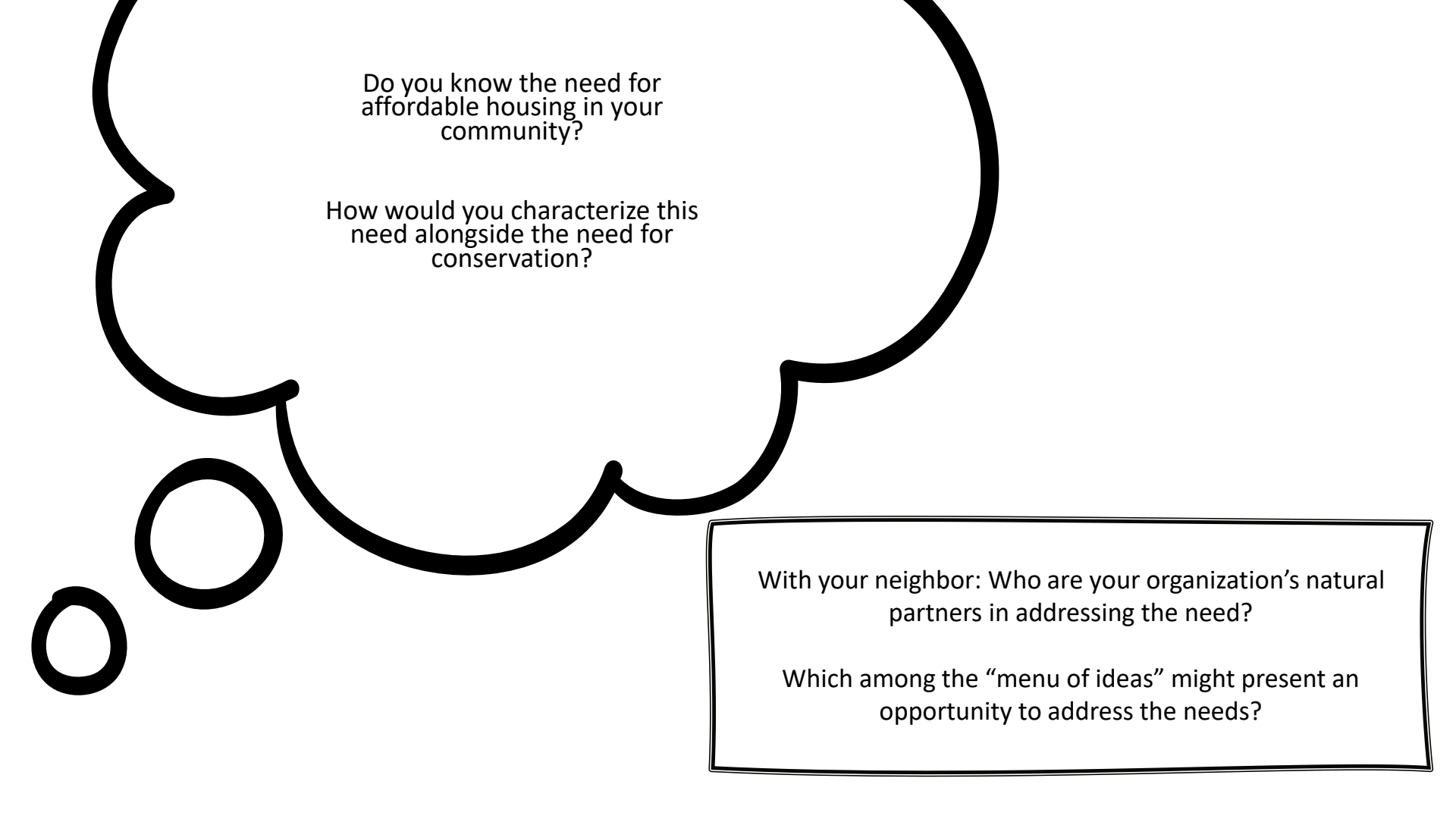
- 8 towns in NW CT
 - Cornwall Norfolk
 - Falls Village Salisbury
 - Goshen Sharon
 - Kent Warren
- Land Trusts
- Housing Organization
- Board of Selectmen
- Planning & Zoning Commission
- Regional housing and conservation organizations, COG

Outcomes

- Strengthened cross-sector relationships
- Aligned understanding of conservation/housing goals
- Readiness to communicate alignment to their communities
- Identification of areas and/or parcels for affordable housing development
- Identification of collaborative projects incorporating conservation and housing

Activities

- Survey of prospective project partners
- Series of Meetings (3-6); most in person, possible site visit
- Create shared purpose/policy statement
- Create map(s) showing priority areas for conservation and for affordable housing
- Develop and implement communications strategy
- Plan and schedule community conversations
- Evaluation and report to funders (draft August); outward-facing report for continued work



Do you know the need for
affordable housing in your
community?

How would you characterize this
need alongside the need for
conservation?

With your neighbor: Who are your organization's natural
partners in addressing the need?

Which among the "menu of ideas" might present an
opportunity to address the needs?

Resources and for more information:

Land Trust Alliance tools

- [National Land Bank + CLT Map | Center for Community Progress](#). Shows land banks, land banking programs, community land trusts, and conservation land trusts across the U.S.
- [Breaking Ground: An Affordable Housing Resource Guide for Land Trusts - Land Trust Alliance](#).

Community Land Trusts and Affordable Housing Organizations

Three national organizations that serve as think tanks, advocates, and/or trade associations for community land trusts and other affordable housing. This is not a complete list and does not include regional and state groups.

1. [Community Land Trust Program - Schumacher Center for a New Economics \(centerforneweconomics.org\)](#).
 2. [Center for Community Land Trust Innovation • Supporting the Global CLT Movement \(cltweb.org\)](#).
 3. [Grounded Solutions Network](#)
- [Lincoln Institute Working Paper 2023](#), “Building Collaboration among Community Land Trusts Providing Affordable Housing and Conservation Land Trusts Protecting Land for Ecological Value” (Michels & Hindin)
 - [Hudson Valley Affordable Housing + Conservation Strategy](#)
 - Menu of Ideas for Advancing Collaboration Among Land Conservation and Affordable Housing Groups in Connecticut. Available from David Hindin on request at DavidHindin@outlook.com
 - Look at your Municipal Plans for Conservation, Development and Affordable Housing.
 - Case studies: Litchfield, CT, Salem, CT, Red Hook, NY, Easthampton, MA - To be Posted

CONNECTICUT
Land Conservation Council

Thank You!

Please share your thoughts: Scan the QR codes below to fill out evaluations online for the 2024 Connecticut Land Conservation Conference



General Conference Evaluations



Workshop Evaluations

Supplemental Slides with case study information

What is a “Community Land Trust”?

Housing affordability that pays it forward

- CLT owns the land
- Stewarding land for affordable homes
- Long-term, renewable, inheritable ground lease
- Moderate-income buyers
- Below-market home sale prices
- Resale price restrictions
- Number in



Growing Green: Easthampton, MA

Project summary:

- 53 acres
- Along Manhan River
- Conservation of 43 acres
- Development of 10 acres along the road
 - 87 affordable rental homes
- Collaboration:
 - Kestrel Land Trust
 - City of Easthampton
 - Mass Audubon
 - The Community Builders (affordable housing nonprofit)




Litchfield, CT



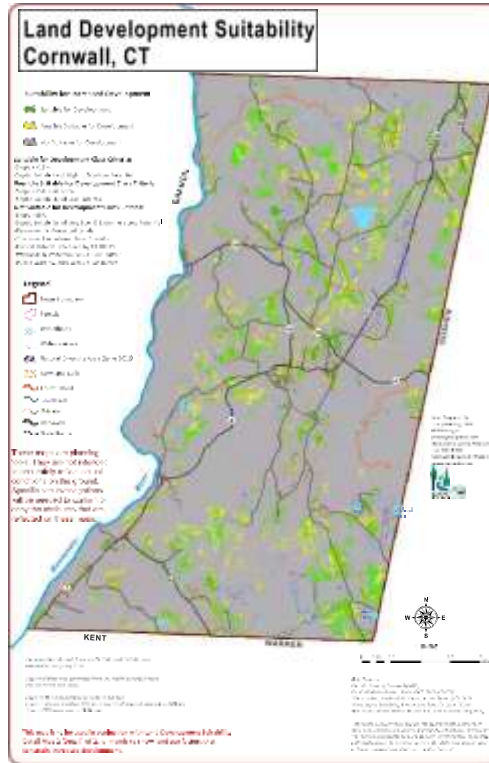
Cornwall, CT

Suitability for Increased Development

 Suitable for Development

 Possible Suitable for Development

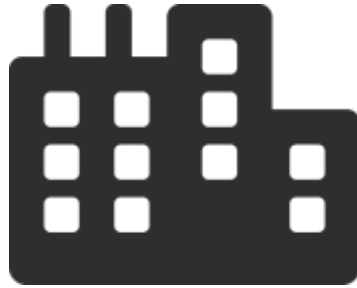
 Not Suitable for Development



New York's Hudson Valley: Increasingly Unsustainable & Inequitable Place To Live



Skyrocketing real estate appreciation



Scattershot real estate development based on private profits



Climate change



Siloed housing and conservation programs with parcel by parcel approach.

Hudson Valley New York Affordable Housing & Conservation Groups

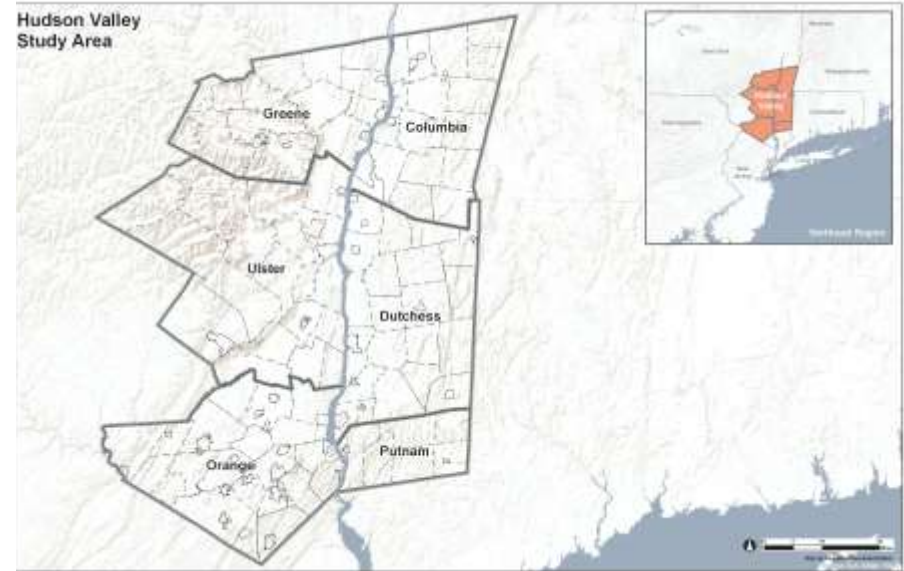
Affordable Housing



Land Conservation



Hudson Valley Study Area



Started with 10 groups, and now 14 groups.

Hudson Valley New York Affordable Housing & Conservation Strategy

Conveners

- Rebecca Gillman Crimmins, affordable housing sector
- Steve Rosenberg, land conservation sector

Facilitation

- Consensus Building Institute
- Fiscal Sponsor and GIS/Technical Support
- Regional Plan Association

Funding Phase 1: \$180,000 Budget

- All 10 organizations contributed
- Small foundations, individuals, and TNC also provided support

Funding Phase 2:

- Columbia Land Conservancy awarded LTA/NYS Conservation Partnership Grant

Phase 1 Completed: 10 monthly meetings, July 2022 to April 2023



- Built relationships and trust via learning, listening and identifying common interests.
- Create shared purpose statement:
The Hudson Valley is a sustainable and inclusive home to an economically and racially diverse community. Our work helps the region develop a holistic, equitable and proactive approach to housing, climate change, and land conservation.
- Created list of policy ideas warranting further exploration.
- Mapped 32 communities where conditions may be conducive to pilot projects.
- Created public strategy: <https://rpa.org/hudson-valley-affordable-housing-conservation-strategy>

Phase 2 Launched to move forward as coalition:



- Leverage collective strength to pilot new approaches
- Refine and advance changes in public policy
- Communicate shared purpose and priorities to boards, constituents, policy makers and the public
- Two housing and two conservation groups initiate collaboration with town for pilot project – see next slide

Posted on: September 13, 2023

PRESS RELEASE - Scenic Hudson Red Hook Gateway Conserved - September 12, 2023

Partnership keeps agricultural land affordable for farmers, provides a suitable site for affordable housing, and will connect public parks with new trails

Project summary:

- 169 acres
- Conservation of 97 acres
 - 63 acres of prime farmland
- Development of 12 acres in the village
 - Rental homes; owner occupied single family homes; and barn retrofit
- Collaboration:
 - Town of Red Hook
 - Scenic Hudson
 - Dutchess Land Conservancy
 - RUPCO (affordable housing nonprofit)

Bottom line: Building meaningful relationships offers major benefits



The Hudson Valley Strategic Plan concludes looking to future:

“Ultimately, the goal is to:

bring about **affordable, energy-efficient housing** near existing town and city centers, accessible to conserved land;

address the **twin, rural challenges** of housing families and workers and conserving farms and natural areas;

adapt former industrial/commercial sites into housing, conserved land and renewable energy;

and **redevelop urban sites with affordable housing and access to parks, jobs, and local food.**

All of this will result in more equitable and climate-forward places to live.”